



(amended) In an information input device, the combination of:

- a) means for inputting first information;
- b) means for storing secret key information which is stored in an external device and fed from the [an] external device; and
- c) means for generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. (amended) An information input device comprising:

- a) means for inputting first information;
 - b) means for compressing said first information;
 - c) means for storing secret key information which is stored in an external device and fed from the [an] external device; and
 - d) means for generating a distinguishing information based on the secret information and the information compressed by said compressing means,
- wherein said external device stores the secret key corresponding to a registered user.

Please amend claim 10 as follows:

10. (amended) An image input apparatus comprising:

- a) an image input device for inputting said image data:
- b) a memory for storing secret information which is stored in an external device and fed from the [an] external device; and
- c) an operation device for carrying out an operation using the image data and the secret information.

Please amend claim 14 as follows:

- Sub 14
14. (amended) An image input system comprising:
- a) a first terminal device for inputting image data;
 - b) a second terminal device for having a memory for storing secret information which is corresponding[corresponds] to a user; and
 - c) an operator[a processor] for executing a command based on an algorithm for generating a digital signature by using the image data and the secret information.

Please amend claim 26 as follows:

- Sub 26
26. (amended) An information input method comprising:
- a) a step of inputting first information;
 - b) a step of storing secret key information which is stored in an external device and fed from the[an] external device; and
 - c) a step of generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information.

Sub 27

[Please amend claim 27 as follows:]

27. (amended) A computer readable memory which cooperates with a data processor and an information input unit to carry out:
- (a) a step of inputting first information;
 - (b) a step of storing secret key information which is stored in an external device and fed from the[an] external device; and
 - (c) step for generating a digital signature based upon the first information and the secret key information.